

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER
OF THE 4TH SPECIAL
TROOPS BATTALION

IMPORTANT TRAINING DATES

- **Company Lanes Training**
3-20 August
- **Convoy Live Fire Training**
8-13 August
- **Cultural Awareness Training**
15-19 August
- **Family Readiness Steering Committee Meeting**
23 August, 1800
- **Pre Deployment Briefing**
30 August, 1800
- **Safety Stand-down Day**
1 September
- **Labor Day training holiday**
2-5 September

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Griffon Herald

"The voice of your soldier as they get ready to deploy!"

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2



AUGUST 1, 2005

Information on Living/Working in Iraq

Lieutenant Colonel Joe Gandara

I recently had the opportunity to take part in a Pre Deployment Site Survey of area the Battalion will be operating in during the next year in Iraq, and wanted to pass on some of what I can on the your soldiers expected living conditions. The soldiers will live on a Forward Operating Base (FOB) which is an area that is surrounded by 10-15 foot concrete barriers and guard towers spread out at intervals throughout the perimeter of the base. There are guarded entry points to get onto and off of the base. While it sounds like the base is more of a confined area, the facilities are usually very good inside the walls. All of the FOBs have gyms or workout areas, a well stocked dining facility run by US contractors, like Kellogg Brown & Root that is so often in the news. The soldiers are billeted in either small 2 man trailer home-like temporary buildings or

existing buildings that have been modified (and significantly improved) to house soldiers. All are air conditioned, a very important necessity when the temperature in July was averaging 117 degrees Fahrenheit during the day and 95 degrees at night.

Most of the soldiers of the Battalion will occupy the same facility, and will shortly be getting a



The Dining Facility on the FOB we will occupy.

classified briefing on the location, hazards, layout, capabilities and functions that they will be dealing

with for the year they are deployed in Iraq.

One of the benefits that your soldiers are going to receive, besides those in the financial area, is a Environmental and Morale Leave (EML) where the Army will pay for your soldier to return to the US (Atlanta and Dallas as a hub location) for 15 days of 'down time'. That will start after 2 months in country and end after 10 months in country. If you have some specific date that you would like to have your soldier home, like family reunion, expecting a child, birthday etc., please let them know and we will do our best to get them back, but since we must keep our manpower strength at a reasonable level to complete our mission safely. That being said, we are trying to get 100% participation in the EML program, so talk to your soldier now.

CSM Walker's, Griffon 7, Second Foxhole Edition

Command Sergeant Major Anthony Walker

As I think of what to write to the Griffon Spouse, Child, Mom, Dad, Sister, Brother or any other Relatives or Significant other to include soon to be applicants. What comes to mind most of all is what I wanted to know or let my parents know as I prepared to go in harms way for the very first time. First of all is that this was my chosen profession, this

was my first step as a grown adult, and to be fully able to stand on my own. Second was that I was receiving some of the best training in the world, from the best trained Officer's and Noncommissioned Officers in the world. I felt and believed that they could count on me and I could count on them. I would always try to do my best and

learn not only my own profession. I would strive to learn, from my Sergeants or the next soldier as well. This instilled in me that if one of us had fell, the mission would still be completed.

I knew then as well as now that we (the US Army) are the best trained and equipped Army in the world. I knew the training would be hard and realistic. This would help me be reassured that I was well prepared prior to deployment.

This also meant some

Headquarters & Headquarters Company Update



2LT Chris Watkins, Support Platoon Leader



The Internet café that soldiers will be able to use to contact home.

Training for HHC STB 4BDE really took off on June 5, 2005 as every soldier prepared for their rigorous field training at Fort Hood, TX. Each platoon was able to focus on their mission and that was particularly important for a company as diverse as HHC.

The Military Police Platoon was able to train extensively on mounted and dismounted urban operations at the Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT) site. They thoroughly rehearsed patrols, searching and extracting

enemy personnel, and building raids both during the day and night. They also trained on area reconnaissance operations and traffic control points.

Other members of HHC also focused on polishing their MOS skills as well. The wrecker crew of the Support Platoon repaired 2 damaged vehicles in the field environment efficiently and effectively. The Food Service Personnel worked through the night on initial set up in order to have food prepared for all soldiers on a timely

manner the next morning. They were selfless and dedicated; every meal was on time. The training would not have been complete without the transportation assistance of the Support Platoon. They ensured that all necessary equipment and personnel arrived to each training site so that everyone could maximize training daily. This exercise allowed the company to learn what it takes to complete a mission and work together; it was essential to our preparation for deployment.



The Battalion S3 (Operations Officer) Major Bill McClary in one of the working areas that will control the Battalion operations in Iraq.

Special Troops Battalion Conducts MOUT training



1LT Derek Mehrtens, Prophet Platoon Leader, A Company

Since the war in Somalia the way our country fights its wars has been drastically changing. The days of fighting the Russian horde in canopy jungle are long gone. Conflicts are now settled within the cities of our enemies; and like the wars we will fight, our enemies are adapting as well. The enemies of our country are no longer conventional warriors. They look and act just like those that we have sworn to protect. These changes have produced a more dangerous atmosphere for the modern day Soldier. So, in order to mitigate these growing risks our soldiers must train to fight in urban environments.

The Special Troops Battalion (STB), "Griffons," undertook this task during their platoon lanes in June of 2005. For most of the soldiers in the STB, this kind of training is relatively new. However, as Les-

sons Learned from OIF has shown, in today's battle it is not just the infantry soldiers that are engaged in combat in the city streets. Utilizing various Army doctrines, i.e. FM 3-06 (Urban Operations) and FM 7-8 (Infantry Rifle Platoon and Squad), the soldiers from the Griffon Battalion learned the tools necessary to be successful in the three dimensional battlefield of the city. The soldiers learned such techniques as movement through an urban environment, clearing rooms and buildings, fire control measures, and night operations. The culmination exercise was a force on force mission at the MOUT site. In this exercise, the companies were split into friendly forces and opposing forces. The friendly forces were given various real world missions to conduct while reacting to situations thrown at them from the OPFOR. Some of these variables included reacting to civilians, react to far

ambush, clear buildings, and react to near ambush.

MOUT training is just the beginning of the training required to prepare the STB for future deployments. Through strong leadership and real world training, the Griffon Battalion will be successful in upcoming deployments.



The Battalion aid station that will be on our FOB in Iraq.

B Company 'Bandits' Update

1LT Justin Horgan, Company Executive Officer



Greetings to the family and friends of the Bravo Company "Bandits". I would like to take this opportunity to inform those interested of past, current and future events that affect the Bravo "Bandits". As you all know, the Army is at a very crucial point in its long history. The Army is currently fighting the War on Terrorism on various battlefronts with an ever changing enemy. To meet the enemy head on, the Army is transforming itself into a fluid body of independent combat brigades. Bravo Company is currently in the middle of this transformation while it prepares to deploy to Iraq.

In recent months, the company has focused on individual and collective training. This has included driver's training, combat lifesaver courses, weapons ranges, leadership reaction course, patrol operations, and signal specific courses. The ranges conducted by the company have taught the soldiers how to properly engage targets with their assigned weapons. The company has ran various ranges to include zero range, qualification range, reflexive fire range, and a convoy live fire range. Each range builds on the last and gives soldiers the skills needed to operate in a combat environment. All together the ranges went well. Soldiers enjoyed the opportunity to learn new weapons skills and refine their old ones. The company spent one week in the field for Platoon Lanes at the beginning of June. It was Bravo Company's first chance to take its equipment out to the field for an extended period of time. The company was able to deploy its signal assets and install a small signal network.

Bravo Company is currently on summer block leave. About eighty percent of the company is on leave to spend time with their family and friends. Many of the soldiers who are remaining are taking part in Joint Network Node (JNN) training. This train-

ing will provide them with a solid foundation to manage the JNN systems that the company will be fielding later this fall. July holds many training opportunities for the company. We are running more ranges and supporting the Brigade with our signal assets.

The future for the company is a busy one. One look at the training calendar will show a full plate of training to be conducted before we rail load or equipment and deploy to Iraq in support of OIF IV. The company will spend more time in the field in the future, with the Brigade's culminating event taking place in October here at Fort Hood. Each training event the company completes is one more building block in our soldiers' pre-deployment training structure. The leadership of the company is committed to provide our soldiers the best training we can before we deploy to Iraq. We are able to accomplish this using the before mentioned training and the prior combat experience of the soldiers in Bravo Company.

Bravo Company would like to recognize the accomplishments of a few soldiers. PFC Ellisia Thompson gave birth to her beautiful baby girl on 24 June. Elliyah Janae Thompson was born at 01:30AM and weighed eight pounds, two ounces. SSG Kameron Hickman just returned to the company after completing the Basic Non Commissioned Officer Course at Fort Gordon, GA. On 01 June, the company had the pleasure to take part in the promotion of SSG Michael Stanley. SSG Stanley has always been a hard working NCO with the ability to accomplish assigned tasks flawlessly. He has embraced the added responsibility that comes with the additional stripe and we are excited to bring his leadership to a position of greater responsibility. Finally, all of the Bravo Company "Bandits" would like to thank our fam-

ily and friends for all that they do. As those who have made it through previous deployments can attest, family and friends are the foundation that drive us to accomplish the great things we as an Army do. Take care and thank you.



Examples of the up armored vehicles that the Battalion will use in Iraq. These will belong to the MP Platoon.



This Wrecker is an example of the up Armored vehicle that the Battalion will use in Iraq.

Official Newsletter of the 4th Special Troops Battalion

Congratulations to the following:

Promotions :

Sergeant James Barnett, B Co
Sergeant Ruben Garcia, HQ Co
Sergeant Maurice Harris, HQ Co
Sergeant James Mastroianni, HQ Co
Sergeant Hal Purka, A Co
Sergeant Stephen Smith, B Co
Specialist John May, HQ Co
Specialist Billy Moreno, A Co
Private First Class Annalynn Bridgers, HQ Co
Private First Class James Collette, HQ Co
Private First Class Robert Erdle, HQ Co
Private First Class Daniel Kinsetter, HQ Co
Private First Class Jeremiah Lafferty, HQ Co
Private First Class John Lange, HQ Co
Private First Class Krystal Lumpkin, A Co
Private First Class America Luna, A Co
Private First Class Sven Manseau, HQ Co
Private First Class Frances Noland, A Co
Private First Class Meagan Peterson, HQ Co
Private First Class Esteban Rico, HQ Co
Private First Class James Scott, HQ Co

Private First Class Michael Sells, HQ Co
Private First Class James Shipe, HQ Co
Private First Class Jason Tormala, HQ Co
Private First Class Kenneth Zehar, HQ Co



CPT Nick Long (above left) is awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart Medals and SGT Christopher Santiago-Colon (above right) is awarded the Purple Heart Medal for their service during Operation Iraqi Freedom

**"THE
GRIFT"**



Special Recognition to:

CPT Nick Long, HQ Co Awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart

AND

SGT Santiago-Colon, HQ Co Awarded the Purple Heart.

You can also get this newsletter on the Web at <http://www.hood.army.mil/4ID/Units/4thBDE/4STB/4stbnl.html>

Griffon 7, Second Foxhole Edition (Con't)

long days and short nights, and even some shorter weekends. Then if there was time I would plan to come home before we deployed. Of course that could even be cancelled with a no notice alert or a move up in our Unit's deployment sequence, or a early call forward because of a changing situation in the Area we where going or the world.

Griffin 7, Out

Back then I just wanted to let the ones who love me know as much I could let them know. Of course as a CSM, I've been around a little longer than your average soldier. Even with that being said, I still feel a soldier should share what he can with his Family to reassure them that they will be trained and ready. That the Army is a Profession of Arms and this is what we have chosen to do, but we will always want to be home in the arms of our love ones. This is why we do what we do, we will remain strong and true to our nations goals, but our love ones will always be in our hearts and minds, Over here or over there.

Family Readiness Leaders Contact Information

HHC

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Financial Entitlements During Deployment

As part of the continued support to the deployed American soldier, the Department of Defense and Congress have continued to improve the benefits of soldiers serving in Iraq. Your soldiers are also entitled to these same benefits as listed below.

Combat Zone Tax Exclusion (CZTE)

- exempts Soldiers who serve in designated hostile fire pay areas (which we will be in) from paying federal AND state income taxes for that month. Officers will be exempt from the first \$6,529.20. It applies immediately for the entire month the soldier is in the combat zone, whether 1 day or the whole month.

Hostile Fire/Imminent Danger Pay (HFP)

- \$225 per month—is a special pay intended to compensate Soldiers serving in locations where they are subjected to imminent danger and/or hostile fire. Congress is looking at increasing this amount, so keep watching the MYPAY website <https://mypay.dfas.mil> for this to occur. Applies instantaneously upon entering the Combat Zone.

Hardship Duty Pay (HDP-L)

- \$100 per month—a special pay intended to compensate Soldiers serving

in locations where living conditions create undue hardship on them. Applies instantaneously upon entering the Combat Zone.

Family Separation Pay (FSP-II)

- \$250 per month—is intended to offset added housing expenses incurred by a member due to enforced separation from dependents. It is payable after 30 days of separation from dependents.

Temporary Duty (Per Diem)

- \$105 per month—Soldiers are assigned to Ft Hood and will be under Temporary Change of Station orders to Iraq, so authorized \$3.50 a day for their service.

Savings Deposit Program

- Provides an opportunity for Soldiers to deposit an amount up to their current unallotted pay into a government savings program that earns 10% interest, compounded quarterly, on amounts up to \$10,000. May be through direct deposit or cash/personal checks, and may be done by an Agent with a special power of attorney on behalf of the deployed soldier.

Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS)

- \$175.23 per month for Soldiers
- \$267.18 per month for Officers

- is a cash allowance intended to help reimburse Soldiers for expenses incurred when subsisting themselves. Married Soldiers get this automatically.

AN EXAMPLE:

A single, E3 PFC in the battalion with over 2 years service:

CZTE	-	\$ 162.00
Per Diem	-	\$ 105.00
Hostile Fire Pay	-	\$ 225.00
BAS	-	\$ 175.23
<u>HDP-L</u>	-	<u>\$ 100.00</u>
Total Per Month		\$ 767.23

AN EXAMPLE:

A Married, E5 SGT in the battalion with over 4 years service: (Note since Married Soldiers already get BAS, it is not included in this calculation)

CZTE	-	\$ 197.00
Per Diem	-	\$ 105.00
Hostile Fire Pay	-	\$ 225.00
FSP-II	-	\$ 250.00
<u>HDP-L</u>	-	<u>\$ 100.00</u>
Total Per Month		\$ 877.00

Add to this any money you put into the Savings Deposit Program, and you could receive a larger amount realized at the end of your tour.

Bn Contact Information

Our Mailing address

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